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ABSTRACT

This study gathered information on the communication skills of preservice teachers using a rating scale based on the Speech Communication Association's (SCA) newly developed list of Teacher Communication Competencies. The research focused on two questions: (1) Can raters from different backgrounds with different levels of training reliably use a rating scale based on the SCA skills? and (2) Which items on the scale discriminate most effectively among preservice teachers? Four raters, including a Director of Student Teaching, a Professional Supervisor, a communication education specialist, and a speech communication professor, reviewed 10 student teacher video-taped lessons. Analysis of the rater's evaluations indicated that the rating scale had potential for an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and had some power to discriminate between effective and ineffective commuication behavior in student teachers. Suggestions are made for improving the efficiency of rating scales in team evaluation of student teacher communication competencies. Copies of the rating scales are included in the report. (JD)

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TEAM EVALUATION OF STUDENT TEACHER COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES THROUGH VIDEOTAPE REVIEW

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TEAM EVALUATION OF STUDENT TEACHER

COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES THROUGH VIDEOTAPE REVIEW

Communication is essential to teaching. This fact, while certainly not a new idea, is receiving renewed attention. AACTE's Educating a Profession: Profile of a Beginning Teacher (1983) asserts, "A teacher's ability to communicate effectively is essential" p. 50. Nutter stated (as cited in McCaleb, 1987) in A Case for Extended Programs of Initial Teacher Preparation, "communication skills are central to relating not only to students but also to professional collegues, parents, and other community representatives... It requires listening and reading skills as well as speaking and writing facility" (pp. 19-20). Recently, various "calls for" a focus on the oral communication competencies of teachers have been issued (e. g., Forster and Sloan, 1979: National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 1979; Rubin and Feezel, 1985). These sources, and more, all point to the fact that the ability to listen, read, write, and speak effectively is essential for effective teaching.

Of these four skills, the two related to oral communication (speaking and listening) have received the least attention over the years in teacher training. Skills in writing and reading seem to be more easily identified and assessed. Oral communication skills are more complicated and seem to involve a wider range of variables. In addition, a lack of agreement as to the constitution of the speaking and listening skills necessary for effective teaching has hampered development of curriculum objectives and assessment procedures in teacher education programs (Cooper, 1987).

This too, is changing. The Speech Communication Association recently commissioned a committee whose purpose was to review, synthesize, and summarize the oral communication competencies that would support effective teaching in all content areas. These competencies

were developed and defined in consultation with professional organizations in teacher education and with a wide range of practicing teachers. These competencies are the basis for the study undertaken in this research.

As attention to the definition of speaking and listening competencies was increasing, so too was attention to the assessment of these skills. More and more states are beginning to include some type of oral communication assessment in teacher education programs. McCaleb (1987) found that more than half of the 50 states have implemented assessments that include some measure of communication ability. Phi Delta Kappa reported in their newsletter (Joekel, 1986, p. 1), "Competency assessment of teachers or teachers in training is occuring in 46 states, only one state has no plans to do so." McCaleb found that at least 10 states are developing or giving serious consideration to adopting performance assessment.

Given this evidence (and other evidence available) a conclusion can be drawn that communication skills are important to effective teaching and that more and more educators are giving serious attention to developing and assessing the communication skills of both in-service and pre-service teachers. However, as McCaleb (1987) points out, the meaning of "communication" differs considerably from state to state. It is possible for a teacher to be found competent in communication in one state and incompetent in another due to differences in both definitions of communication and methods of assessing those skills. In an effort to begin to bring some coherence to the effort to define and assess the communication skills of teachers, the Speech Communication Association developed the Teacher Communication Competencies refered to above. The research project reported in this paper is based on the communication skills developed by the Speech Communication Association.

The idea for this research project resulted from a conversation between the Director of Student Teaching and a speech communication faculty member on the Central Washington

University campus concerning the communication skills of the University's student teachers. The two faculty members decided to pool their expertise and collaborate on a study that would indicate the communication skills of student teachers as compared to the competencies outlined by SCA.

This research then focused on two research questions:

1. Can raters from different backgrounds with different levels of training reliably use a rating scale based on the SCA skills?
2. Which items on the scale discriminate most effectively among pre-service teachers?

METHODS

To gather information on these questions, a rating scale was developed based on the skills outlined by the Speech Communication Association (see appendix 1). The scale includes a line to indicate no rating (teacher had no opportunity to demonstrate the skills during the segment viewed), a four point scale for rating the skill, and a line for the confidence level of the judgment.

From a series of student teacher video taped lessons there were 10 video tapes selected randomly for this study. Those selected included 4 elementary student teachers, 5 secondary student teachers, and one special education teacher. These student teacher video tapes were rated by four raters including the Director of Student Teaching, a Professional Supervisor, a communication education specialist, and a speech communication professor. The raters were given a brief session to familiarize each with the rating scale. Then the videotapes of the student teachers were reviewed and rated by the raters. The videotape segments ranged in length from 10 minutes to 20 minutes.

DATA ANALYSIS

Ratings were analyzed using Pearson's "r" correlation coefficient. Coefficients were calculated for each possible pair of raters and for the raters as a group for each item on the scale. The level of signficance was set at .05 to determine which scale items received a signficant level of inter-rater reliability.

RESULTS

Our first research question was concerned with the ability of raters from different backgrounds to use a scale based on the SCA teacher communication competencies reliably. Our research gave us a qualified "yes" to this question.

Of the thirty-eight items in the original scale, twenty-three items appeared with at least one pair of raters showing significant correlation ($p>.05$). Of these twenty-three items, thirteen appeared with one pair of significant correlations, three items appeared with two pairs of significant correlations, six items appeared with three pairs of signficant correlations, and one item appeared with four pairs of significant correlations (out of a possible six). In addtion, a non-anchored single rater reliability coefficient of .4268 was calucated across all four raters for all thirty-eight items. This reliability coefficient, non-anchored single rater reliability, is a useful indicator of the predictive reliability of the instrument. Essentially, if a single rater trained in using the instrument were to rate a teacher using this scale, this reliability coefficient would give us a measure of prediction on the ability of that rater to use the scale reliably.

Of the fifteen items not showing a significant level of reliability, two were rated by the raters, but the ratings showed no signficant reliability. The thirteen other items appeared too infrequently in the videotape samples: insufficient information was obtained to make any

inferences about the rater reliability level.

Our second research question concerned itself with the ability of the scale to discriminate effectively among the communication skill levels of pre-service teachers. Our primary tool for answering this question was a comparision between the scores of two of the raters. One rater was the Director of Student Teaching. This rater knew each of the subjects well, having supervised and advised them in their teacher training programs. His knowledge of the subjects gave him more information to use in making his ratings of the subjects. The other rater was a specialist in speech communication education. He did not know any of the subjects, and was seeing each for the first time. Our estimation of the discriminatory power of the scale was the level of agreement between these two raters. Results showed that thirteen items showed a significant level of agreement between these two raters.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to gather information on the communication skills of pre-service teachers using a rating scale based on the Speech Communication Association's newly developed list of Teacher Communication Competencies. This study gave preliminary answers to the two research questions developed for this research. These answers, and other conclusions, are described below.

1. A rating scale based on the SCA competencies does have potential for an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability. The researchers suggest that further studies devote more time to rater training and practice. With greater familiarization, reliability estimates could rise significantly.

2. The scale itself needs refinement in three areas. A) greater clarity in the wording to ensure a low level of item ambiguity, B) alteration or potential deletion of the items that couldn't be

rated due to non-appearance in the sample, and C) addition of items in the affective area to further discriminate behavior in that important area. Work in these three areas could signficantly improve scale validity.

3. The researcher suggest that raters continue to rate video-tape samples. Using this method removes some of the anxiety a student teacher might feel if a rater was present in the room. The student would not need to know why the video-tape was being made.

4. The scale does have some power to discriminate between effective and ineffective communication behavior in student teachers. This was demonstrated by the level of agreement reached by two of the raters who come from very different backgrounds and who possessed very different levels of knowledge about the student teachers themselves. The discriminatory power of the scale can be further refined by additional development in the reliability and validity of the scale.

The communication skills of teachers are important. The Speech Communication Association has made an effort to bring together some of the disparate conceptions of communication used in schools of education. This effort is a much-needed step in bringing consistancy to an area of study that has seen little consistancy in recent years. If, as this study suggests, an assessment procedure can be developed that is based on the SCA competencies, then another useful step will have been taken. Teacher training programs may have, at some time in the near future, a clear set of communication competencies for teachers and a rating scale that effectively assesses those competencies.

To move in that direction, a number of further research projects based on these competencies could be developed. For example, a control group of student teachers could be compared to an experimental group of student teachers that have received some instruction in classroom communication skills that are based on the SCA competencies. Other studies could

involve a) comparing grade and/or subject levels for similarities or differences in the use of these communication competencies; b) comparing the communication skills of student teachers to experienced teachers; and c) examining the communication skills of teacher that have been identified as being known in their districts or schools as effective communicators.

The authors suggest that there be more collaboration between teacher educators and speech communication educators to facilitate better communication skills in our teachers of the future.

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TEACHER COMMUNICATION RATING SCALE

This version of the rating scale shows only those items that had at least one pair of raters with a signficant level of reliability. All other items were deleted. In all cases except numbers 11 asnd 17, items were deleted due to insufficient information from the videotape sample. Only numbers 11 and 17 were deleted due to insignificant reliability.

*** Indicates items with significant levels of reliability between four pairs of raters.

** Indicates items with significant levels of reliability between pairs of raters.

* Indicates items with signficant levels of reliability between two pairs of raters.

All other items listed had signficant levels of reliability between one pair of raters.

TEACHER'S COMMUNICATION RATING SCALE

Ratings do not need to be made in order presented here. In some instances, the rating for a behavior may be done during the observation. In other instances, the rating may need to be done at the completion of the observation to insure an adequate sample.

1. INFORMATIVE MESSAGES

a. sending

*1. Structures informative messages effectively by using devices such as intitial partitions, transitions, internal summaries, and concluding summaries.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

*2. Amplifies information effectively through the use of verbal and audio-visual supporting materials.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

***3. Asks effective questions to assess student understanding of information given in lectures.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

**4. Presents information in an animated and interesting way.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

b. Receiving

*1. Is able to identify main point of student comment.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

3. Can evaluate the adequacy of verbal supporting materials.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

**4. Can formulate questions that probe for the informative content of messages.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

2. Affective messages. Teacher should demonstrate competence in sending and receiving affective messages (i.e., messages thatexpress or respond to feelings).

a. sending affective messages

**1. Express positive and negative feelings about self to students.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

4. Demonstrate interpersonal openness, warmth, and positive regard for students.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

5. Demonstrates energy and enthusiasm when relating to students.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

b. receiving affective messages.

2. Invite students to express feelings.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

5. If necessary, offer advice tactfully.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

3. Imaginative messages. Teacher should demonstrate competence in sending and receiving imaginative messages (i.e., messages that speculate, theorize, or include fantasy).

a. sending

1. Use vivid descriptive language.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

2. Uses expressive vocal and physical behavior when creating or recreating examples, stories, or messages from exemplars.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

b. Receiving

**1. Respond to imaginative messages enthusiastically.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

**2. Be non-directive when encouraging student creativity.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

4. Ritualistic messages. Teacher should demonstrate competence in sending and receiving ritualistic messages (i.e., messages that serve to maintian and facilitate social interaction).

a. Sending.

1. Demonstrate appropriate behavior in performing everyday speech acts such as greeting, turn-taking, and leave taking.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

2. Model appropriate social amenities in ordinary classroom interaction.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

3. Demonstrate competence when participating in or role-playing interviews, conversations, problems solving groups, legislative groups, and public ceremonies.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

b. Receiving.

1. Recognize when students perform everday speech acts appropriately.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

5. Persuasive messages. Teacher should demonstrate competence in sending and receiving persuasive messages (i.e., messages that seek to convince).

a. sending

3. Offers sound reasons and evidence in support of ideas.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

5. Demonstrates a preference for reason-giving over power moves when interacting with students.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

b. receiving

3. Evaluates evidence and reasons presented.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

TEACHER COMMUNICATION RATING SCALE

Teacher name_____ Date_____

School_____ Evaluator_____

Grade Level_____ Student Teacher?____

Certified?_____

This evaluation form follows the Speech Communication Association's newly develop description of teacher communication competencies. It can be used as a basis for observation in evaluating the classroom communication skills of student teachers to determine the presence or absence of these communication skills.

It is suggested that the following criteria for rating each item be followed for consistancy in using this instrument.

Let a #1 rating mean.....Behavior did not appear in this observation

Let a #2 rating mean.....Opportunities for behavior were present, but student did not demonstrate the behavior at the appropriate time.

Let a #3 rating mean.....Behavior demonstrated occassionally

Let a #4 rating mean.....Behavior demonstrated consistantly, effectiveness average.

Let a #5 rating mean.....Behavior demonstrated consistantly with obvious skill.

Column #6 - Confidence of judgment. In observing a teacher for a short period of time, not all behaviors may be judged with equal confidence. Column #6 asks the rater to give a confidence level for the judgment of the indicated skill.

-Rating of 1 indicates low confidence in judgment. There were low levels of the observed behaviors.
-Rating of 2 indicates average confidence in judgment.
-Rating of 3 indicates high confidence in judgment.

TEACHER'S COMMUNICATION RATING SCALE

Ratings do not need to be made in order presented here. In some instances, the rating for a behavior may be done during the observation. In other instances, the rating may need to be done at the completion of the observation to insure an adequate sample.

1. INFORMATIVE MESSAGES
   a. sending
      1. Structures informative messages effectively by using devices such as intitial partitions, transitions, internal summaries, and concluding summaries.

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      2. Amplifies information effectively through the use of verbal and audio-visual supporting materials.

         1-NR 2 3 4 5 6-CJ

      3. Asks effective questions to assess student understanding of information given in lectures.

         1-NR 2 3 4 5 6-CJ

      4. Presents information in an animated and interesting way.

         1-NR 2 3 4 5 6-CJ

   b. Receiving
      1. Is able to identify main point of student comment

         1-NR 2 3 4 5 6-CJ

      2. Can identify structural patterns or problems of informative messages.

         1-NR 2 3 4 5 6-CJ

      3. Can evaluate the adequacy of verbal supporting materials.

         1-NR 2 3 4 5 6-CJ

      4. Can formulate questions that probe for the informative content of messages.

         1-NR 2 3 4 5 6-CJ

      5. Can distinguish between messages which are delivered in an animated manner and those which are not.

         1-NR 2 3 4 5 6-CJ

2. Affective messages. Teacher should demonstrate competence in sending and receiving affective messages (i.e., messages that express or respond to feelings).

a. sending affective messages

1. Express positive and negative feelings about self to students.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

2. Express positive and negative feelings about students to students.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

3. Expresses opinions about classroom content, events, and real world occurances.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

4. Demonstrate interpersonal openness, warmth, and positive regard for students.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

5. Demonstrates energy and enthusiasm when relating to students.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-NR

b. receiving affective messages.

1. Recognize verbal and nonverbal cues concerning student feelings.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

2. Invite students to express feelings.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

3. Be non-judgmental in responding to student feelings

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

4. Ask open-ended questions in response to student expressions of feelings.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

5. If necessary, offer advice tactfully.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

3. Imaginative messages. Teacher should demonstrate competence in sending and receiving imaginative messages (i.e., messages that speculate, theorize, or include fantasy).

a. sending

1. Use vivid descriptive language.

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2. Uses expressive vocal and physical behavior when creating or recreating examples, stories, or messages from exemplars.

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1. Respond to imaginative messages enthusiastically.

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2. Be non-directive when encouraging student creativity.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

4. Ritualistic messages. Teacher should demonstrate competence in sending and receiving ritualistic messages (i.e., messages that serve to maintian and facilitate social interaction).

a. Sending.

1. Demonstrate appropriate behavior in performing everyday speech acts such as greeting, turn-taking, and leave taking.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

2. Model appropriate social amenities in ordinary classroom interaction.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

3. Demonstrate competence when participating in or role-playing interviews, conversations, problems solving groups, legislative groups, and public ceremonies.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

b. Receiving.

1. Recognize when students perform everday speech acts appropriately.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

2. Recognize appropriate and inappropriate performances of social amenities.

1-NR	2	3	4	5	6-CJ

3. Recognize competence and incompetence when students participate in interviews, conversations, problem-solving groups, legislative groups, and public ceremonies.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

5. Persuasive messages. Teacher should demonstrate competence in sending and receiving persuasive messages (i.e., messages that seek to convince).

a. sending

1. Can differentiate between fact and opinion.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

2. Can recognize audience factors which may encourage or constrain acceptance of ideas.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

3. Offers sound reasons and evidence in support of ideas.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

4. Recognizes underlying assumptions in one's own arguments.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

5. Demonstrates a preference for reason-giving over power moves when interacting with students.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

b. receiving

1. Recognizes own bias in responding to ideas.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

2. Questions the adequacy of reasons and evidence given.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

3. Evaluates evidence and reasons presented.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ

4. Recognizes underlying assumptions in arguments of others.

1-NR ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5 ____ 6-CJ